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# THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ARYAN LITERATURE

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## William Q. Judge

April 13, 1851—March 21, 1896

MAN *lives at once in two worlds: the natural and the spiritual, and as in the natural plane he influences his associates, and is in turn influenced by them, so let him not imagine that in the spiritual plane he is alone. Throughout this vast universe the good will seek the good, and the evil the evil; each will be unconsciously* DRAWN TO ITS OWN KIND. *Blind indeed is he who cannot see why those who are in possession of arcane wisdom, hesitate in giving it out to the world, and when in the cycles of time its day has come, they put forth the only doctrine which has power to save and bless,* UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD, *with all that the term implies.* —W.Q.J.

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A U M

I would have loved to meet more with those who guess at truths, for such alone are living men. —ST. MARTIN

# THEOSOPHY

Vol. XXXVI March, 1948 No. 5

## THE MEANING OF A LIFE

IF it were said that the life of William Q. Judge, theosophical worker in America for twenty-one years of the last century, was compounded of devotion to the cause of Masters, what would the phrase convey? William Q. Judge did many things, wrote many articles, corresponded with many people, but he would be the last to argue that these things in themselves were important or necessary. He drew many minds and hearts by rare personal qualities, and was the focus for much discontent and animosity on the part of fellow-theosophists, but he seemed not to consider praise or blame, honor or dishonor in the eyes of men, as finally significant judgments of work done or attempted. His devotion to Theosophy earned him unique tributes from H. P. Blavatsky, the messenger of Theosophy in the nineteenth century, but apparently he took no personal credit for his success, nor did he seek to derive prestige from the honorable mention.

On what grounds, then, is the meaning of Mr. Judge's life asserted in the abstract terms of devotion to Masters' cause?

Actually, there is not much doubt about his central motivation. The "Judge case" left his position clearly formulated for the record. Writing to a fellow-student, Mr. Judge stated his stand:

> Attacks cannot hurt: they must needs come, but all we have to do is to keep right on, working steadily. . . . For, that which is done in Their [the Masters'] name will come right; and this whole thing has arisen because I have chosen to proclaim my personal belief in the existence of these beings of grandeur.

A review of theosophical history following the death of H. P. Blavatsky in 1891, shows that Mr. Judge was not the only one among prominent members of the Society to publicly discuss his belief in the Theosophical Mahatmas. A. P. Sinnett claimed personal communication with the Masters as proof of his theory on "planetary chains." Mrs. Besant was hearing what she thought was the "Master's" voice. Col. Olcott, president of the T.S., complained bitterly of Judge's "dogmatism" respecting H.P.B. and the Masters, even while implying "occult connections" of his own by referring, in an official Convention address, to *recent* messages from the Masters, presumably received by himself.

Mr. Judge was not among the would-be successors of H.P.B. Alone of them all, his declarations upheld unreservedly H.P.B.'s position and work, and pointed without deviation or personal embellishments to the program theosophists could most naturally carry on, the original program of the Masters who were the real Founders of the Movement. If Mr. Judge's conduct throughout the persecution by what H.P.B. called "nominal theosophists" was strictly impersonal, this was not altogether due to his well-known preference for self-effacement and anonymity. His impersonality in this instance must also be attributed to the fact that he could not proceed as if H.P.B. were "a spent force" in the theosophical movement. His refusal to compromise on this point was the main thorn in the sides of the successor-claimants, but no amount of calumny or ill-will could sway him. H.P.B. had written, "He (W.Q.J.) has been a part of myself for æons past," and to Mr. Judge H.P.B. remained a *living* force. Can this have been the reason for the steady stream of his articles in the *Path* magazine—articles so wise and penetrating in their psychology, so unpretentious in their form, yet so educative in application of Theosophic philosophy to daily living?

Mr. Judge, from the first days of the Theosophical Society, had exerted himself to discover the basis in philosophy for the "lines laid down" concerning the objectives of the theosophical movement. Keeping in close touch with H.P.B., he was perhaps the only one who never confused the organization with the reality behind it. After her death, he wrote of "The Future and the Theosophical Society," under one of the pseudonyms he often employed

to invite impersonal attention to ideas. From personal experience and considered judgment, he offered a broad view of the Movement, and refused to throw overboard, in the new crisis, the lessons of the past, for as he said, "the outlook, the difficulties, the dangers, the necessities are the same now as then, and as they were in the beginning of this attempt in 1875." He declared forthrightly, "There must be an adherence to the program of the Masters. That can only be ascertained by consulting [H.P.B.] and the letters given out by her as from those to whom she refers." Further, he shows that the program is not designed for "special people" nor for sectarian efforts, and will not appeal to motives of self-advancement:

> It is a call to work for the race and not for self, a request to bring to the west and the east the doctrines that have most effect on human conduct, on the relations of man to man, and hence the greatest possibility of forming at last a true universal brotherhood. We must follow this program and supply the world with a system of philosophy which gives a sure and logical basis for ethics, and that can only be gotten from those to which I have adverted. . . .
>
> We do not claim to be the sole force that began the uprooting of dogmatism and priestcraft, but only that we have supplied a link, given words, stirred up thoughts of the very highest importance just at a time when the age was swinging back to anything but what the reformers had fought for.

When controversial points agitated theosophists, Mr. Judge habitually turned to a consideration of the philosophy in application to the circumstance or doctrine in question. In reference to Mr. Sinnett's claims, he brought to the fore the idea that the "earth-chain of globes" refers to phases of *consciousness,* not physical localities. Had theosophists seen the significance of this approach to phenomena of consciousness, a whole philosophical psychology might have been developed for the world which was to have more and more need of a science of soul. In regard to "messages from the Masters," W.Q.J. reviewed the laws and Adept powers involved in the precipitation of "occult letters," but did not stop with the process. He went on to draw attention to the principle that the genuineness of any message can be determined only by inner senses, in the same way that an idea from whatever source must be referred

to a man's own judgment and discrimination. Constantly reiterating the fundamentals of the theosophical philosophy, Mr. Judge did not hesitate to declare his faith in Masters of Wisdom as beings of elevated intelligence, purified motive, and perfected will. This, he explained, was following a law of mind that "the existence of Masters being a *fact,* the assertion of that fact made so often in America has opened up channels in men's minds which otherwise would have remained closed." Knowing the character of his compatriots, he couched his testimony on perfected men in common-sense language, just as in rendering the *Bhagavad-Gita* and Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms,* he gave ancient teachings of the mystical East a scientific simplicity without losing the subtle essence of the originals. His reply to a question on help from Masters ends with a characteristic emphasis: "Personally I know that the Masters do help powerfully, though unseen, all those who earnestly work and sincerely trust in their higher nature, while they follow the voice of conscience without doubt or cavil." The Masters, he elsewhere remarks, "live in the plane of our inner nature," thus having a natural connection with mankind.

With a sure feeling for the reality of the unexpressed intimations which are the stuff of aspiration, and which form the subtle medium of the finer human relationships, Mr. Judge was yet capable of suggesting the intangibles in such a way as to attract for them a deeper respect, and to draw from them ever fresh inspiration. He was continually seeking ways to relate the clarity of metaphysics to the problems of daily life, and above all, he "brings home" to the earnest student the possibilities implicit in the doctrine of the dual *manas.* He delineated the limitations of the brain-mind, and encouraged the inner discipline of metaphysical thinking. His emphasis on attitudes and ideals was in furtherance of brotherhood among men—a practical need that is seriously delayed by the force of materialistic psychology.

The mind of man must have a transcendant focus if its energy is to promote human betterment. In the case of William Q. Judge, devotion to the cause of Masters was such a focus—a principle of action he knew all men might some day have in common.

# WHY "THE PATH"?

[This article is the opening editorial of Mr. Judge's *Path* Magazine, which he edited for ten years in New York—from April, 1886, to his death in March, 1896. (The title used is our own.) For the first seven years he published special editorials, usually at the close of one volume and the beginning of the next, which together provide a philosophical modulus for the promulgation of Theosophy. These are to be reprinted in THEOSOPHY in this and following issues. Passages and sentences here and there throughout the series will be familiar to most theosophists, but in consideration of the problems facing all those engaged in disseminating the fundamental ideas of Theosophy, the general context of Mr. Judge's observations is no less important than the observations themselves.

*The Path* was not published "in a vacuum," nor for profit, nor even as a commercial venture in which "ends" were expected to meet. It was not directed to any one class of minds, nor did it advocate any particular theory of reform. It was devoted to impersonal thought and discussion: its editor was steadfast and resourceful in pursuing the policy of impersonality—not by means of pseudonyms alone, but chiefly by a concentration on constructive principles and methods, on points of view rather than personalities. W.Q.J. endeavored to encourage creative theosophical writing, and to establish a strong focus for intuitive minds. Within two years of its foundation, H. P. Blavatsky could write, in her first message to the American theosophists, that the *Path* "is a teacher and a power." In Mr. Judge's editorials on the magazine's aim and purpose will be found the moving spirit of its inspiration.—Eds. THEOSOPHY.]

THIS Magazine is not intended either to replace or to rival in America *The Theosophist,* nor any other journal now published in the interest of Theosophy.

Whether we are right in starting it the future alone will determine. To us it appears that there is a field and a need for it in this country. No cultivating of this field is necessary, for it is already ripe.

*The Theosophist* is the organ of the Theosophical Society, now spread all over the civilized world; its readers and subscribers are everywhere, and yet there are many persons who will not subscribe for it although they are aware of its existence; furthermore, being an Indian publication, it necessarily follows, because of certain

peculiar circumstances, that it cannot be brought to the attention of a large class of persons whom this journal will endeavour to reach.

But while the founders of *The Path* are Theosophists, they do not speak authoritatively for the Theosophical Society. It is true that had they never heard of Theosophy, or were they not members of the Society, they would not have thought of bringing out this magazine, the impulse for which arose directly from Theosophical teachings and literature.

It is because they are men, and therefore interested in anything concerning the human race, that they have resolved to try on the one hand to point out to their fellows a Path in which they have found hope for man, and on the other to investigate all systems of ethics and philosophy claiming to lead directly to such a path, regardless of the possibility that the highway may, after all, be in another direction from the one in which they are looking. From their present standpoint it appears to them that the true path lies in the way pointed out by our Aryan forefathers, philosophers and sages, whose light is still shining brightly, albeit that this is now Kali Yuga, or the age of darkness.

The solution of the problem, "What and Where is the Path to Happiness," has been discovered by those of old time. They thought it was in the pursuit of Raja Yoga, which is the highest science and the highest religion—a union of both. In elaborating this, they wrote much more than we can hope to master in the lifetime of this journal, and they have had many kinds of followers, many devotees, who, while earnestly desiring to arrive at truth, have erred in favour of the letter of the teachings. Such are some of the mendicants of Hindoostan who insist upon the verbal repetition of OM for thousands of times, or upon the practice of postures and breathing alone, forgetting that over all stands the real man, at once the spectator of and sufferer by these mistakes. *This is not the path.*

At the same time we do not intend to slight the results arrived at by others who lived within our own era. They shall receive attention, for it may be that the mind of the race has changed so as to make it necessary now to present truths in a garb which in former times was of no utility. Whatever the outer veil, the truth remains ever the same.

The study of what is now called "practical occultism" has some interest for us, and will receive the attention it may merit, but is not *the* object of this journal. We regard it as incidental to the journey along the path. The traveller, in going from one city to another, has, perhaps, to cross several rivers; may be his conveyance fails him and he is obliged to swim, or he must, in order to pass a great mountain, know engineering in order to tunnel through it, or is compelled to exercise the art of locating his exact position by observation of the sun; but all that is only incidental to his main object of reaching his destination. We admit the existence of hidden, powerful forces in nature, and believe that every day greater progress is made toward an understanding of them. Astral body formation, clairvoyance, looking into the astral light, and controlling elementals, is all possible, but not all profitable. The electrical current, which when resisted in the carbon, produces intense light, may be brought into existence by any ignoramus, who has the key to the engine room and can turn the crank that starts the dynamo, but is unable to prevent his fellow man or himself from being instantly killed, should that current accidentally be diverted through his body. The control of these hidden forces is not easily obtained, nor can phenomena be produced without danger, and in our view the attainment of true wisdom is not by means of phenomena, but through the development which begins within. Besides that, mankind in the mass are not able to reach to phenomena, while every one can understand right thought, right speech, and right action.

True occultism is clearly set forth in the *Bhagavad Gita,* and *Light on the Path,* where sufficient stress is laid upon practical occultism, but after all, Krishna says, the kingly science and the kingly mystery is devotion to and study of the light which comes from within. The very first step in true mysticism and true occultism is to try to apprehend the meaning of Universal Brotherhood, without which the very highest progress in the practice of magic turns to ashes in the mouth.

We appeal, therefore, to all who wish to raise themselves and their fellow creatures—man and beast—out of the thoughtless jog trot of selfish everyday life. It is not thought that Utopia can be established in a day; but through the spreading of the idea of Universal Brotherhood, the truth in all things may be discovered.

Certainly, if we all say that it is useless, that such highly strung, sentimental notions cannot obtain currency, nothing will ever be done. A beginning must be made, and has been, by the Theosophical Society. Although philanthropic institutions and schemes are constantly being brought forward by good and noble men and women, vice, selfishness, brutality and the resulting misery, seem to grow no less. Riches are accumulating in the hands of the few, while the poor are ground harder every day as they increase in number. Prisons, asylums for the outcast and the magdalen, can be filled much faster than it is possible to erect them. All this points unerringly to the existence of a vital error somewhere. It shows that merely healing the outside by hanging a murderer or providing asylums and prisons, will never reduce the number of criminals nor the hordes of children born and growing up in hotbeds of vice. What is wanted is true knowledge of the spiritual condition of man, his aim and destiny. This is offered to a reasonable certainty in the Aryan literature, and those who must begin the reform, are those who are so fortunate as to be placed in the world where they can see and think out the problems all are endeavoring to solve, even if they know that the great day may not come until after their death. Such a study leads us to accept the utterance of Prajapati to his sons: "Be restrained, be liberal, be merciful"; it is the death of selfishness.

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## THE BEGINNING OF CHANGE

A free man may utter truthfully what he thinks and what he feels in the midst of thousands of men who by their actions and doings show something quite the opposite. It would seem that the truthful man must stand alone, yet it happens mostly that the majority also think and feel the same, only that they do not express it. What was yesterday a new opinion of the one man, to-day is the joint opinion of the majority. As soon as that opinion establishes itself, men's actions commence to change slowly, and by degrees. —LEO TOLSTOY

# FINGER-POSTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

## Boethius

ALL during the Middle Ages, although practical study of philosophy amounted to a political and religious crime, there stood "fingerposts" to the One Wisdom. The life of mind, essentially occult, can be pursued in spite of physical oppression, and the secret fraternity of philosophical mystics—united without reference to time or space—had passwords inviolable, and meeting-places unassailable by force. The meeting-places were ideas, which cannot be kept from the Thinker, nor invaded by the ignorant. The passwords were doctrines that had to be understood to be expressed, and which cannot be recorded except in symbols.

To trace the line of philosophical heredity, to discover the unbroken continuity of the secret doctrine down through history, is a project encouraged by the teachers of Theosophy. It is more than an academic undertaking: using the touchstone of the "three fundamental propositions" to reveal the presence of the Wisdom-Religion in its various incarnations develops the power of discernment which practical philosophy evokes and requires.* H. P. Blavatsky wrote, in a paraphrase of Porphyry, "The occult or secret knowledge has for its object terrestrial life in accordance with Nous, or our everlasting reincarnating *Ego.*" Those who lived this life declared the true philosophy and are to be known by that sign.

The statesman-scholar, Boethius, was born of noble Roman lineage about 480 A.D. Wherever and however acquired, his education was thorough, involving the deeper aspects of the classical "pagan" tradition. While Boethius was of a Christian family, he was not an orthodox churchman: neither Christ nor the Bible is referred to in his final and most famous work, *The Consolation of Philosophy.* Zeller, the historian, speaks of "the noble Boethius" as "the last representative of the ancient philosophy; for though he may have associated himself externally with the Christian Church, his real religion is philosophy." Other representatives of the ancient

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*Previous articles on the plan of the Second Object are the "Ancient Landmarks" series, beginning in THEOSOPHY XIV, and the "Great Theosophists" series, XXIV to XXVII. Earlier studies in the present series will be found in XXXI, 497; XXXII, 107 and 206.

philosophy followed Boethius, as the present series will show, but Zeller's tribute is not thereby lessened. Boethius is identified in Hasting's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* as one who represents "an eclectic Neo-Platonism mainly concerned with ethics."

In the midst of political life, at a time when learning and respect for philosophy were largely on the wane, Boethius filled his scant leisure with a consuming purpose. He sought to record the principles of philosophic education for his countrymen, drawing his material from the "bright millennium of history," that had closed, a century earlier, with the murder of Hypatia, last of the Neoplatonists. His scholarly labors were conceived by the same humanity which governed his official acts; he protected the innocent from persecution, while saving the wise from cultural oblivion. Eventually, as to all men according to their integrity and fortitude, a tide of misfortune swept into his life, and carried away family, friends, place and position. Alone in a dungeon, and in the harsher jail of unmerited suffering, he crowned his renditions of philosophical treatises with the *Consolation*—a demonstration of philosophy itself.

The details of the misfortunes Boethius suffered are less important than the fact that he, like Arjuna, beheld all his dearest hopes suddenly and unaccountably blighted. The occasion for his disgrace and imprisonment is not adequately explained by the surviving records of his life, but the hazards of paganism in his day were all too real. Theodoric, the Gothic king of Italy, whom Boethius served as consul and esteemed friend, was a man of unusual tolerance, yet one of his edicts announced—"Anyone who is an accomplice in magic arts shall suffer confiscation of all his property, and if of high birth, be sentenced to perpetual exile, or if of low birth, suffer capital punishment."

So strong was the fear of pagan knowledge that when the political enemies of Boethius gained the ear of the king with their charges of treason, Boethius, as part of his defence, found it necessary to deny an adherence to the black arts. His testimony was in vain, and after a long imprisonment, he was put to death, in 525. There is evidence that Theodoric repented of his cruelty, and that his own death, which followed soon after, was hastened by remorse for the injustice he had visited upon his great counsellor.

Whatever his connection with the Neoplatonists may have been, Boethius subscribed wholeheartedly to the reconciliation of the teachings of Plato and Aristotle—a project impossible of accomplishment except for one well grounded in the higher symbolism. The radical difference between Plato and Aristotle is, as explained by H. P. Blavatsky in her *Secret Doctrine* (I, 493), that Aristotle had never been initiated, while Plato had. Aristotle lacked the key laws of analogy and correspondence (II, 153): "The transcendental application of geometry to Cosmic and divine theogony—the Alpha and the Omega of mystical conception—became dwarfed after Pythagoras by Aristotle," writes H.P.B. (I, 615). There is, then, more than a statistic in the information that Boethius furnished manuals on arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy for the schools of the Middle Ages. Mme. Blavatsky refers (I, 361) to the "ancient manuscripts of Boethius' *Geometry*" for certain doctrines of the Pythagoreans.

Boethius belonged to a school of writers on music who based their science on the method of Pythagoras, although that teacher was removed from them by a thousand years and had left no writings behind. These musicians, it is said, "thought it not sufficient to trust to the ear alone . . . but that along with the ear, physical experiments should be employed." The scientific attainments of Boethius enabled him to construct water-clocks and sundials for Theodoric to send as gifts to foreign monarchs. Boethius also held to the theory that the stars have souls and are governed by intelligent powers, and that the planets are correlated to certain musical chords. He describes *person,* "the individual substance of a rational nature," in a way suggestive of the principle of *manas,* and the law inherent in life itself seems to be implied in another of his definitions: "Fate is the disposition inherent in movable things by which Providence binds each by its order."

Of more weight than specific teachings is the general aim and influence of his scholarly activity. For the purpose of rendering the essentials of ancient philosophy available to the men of his time, Boethius evolved nothing less than a new vehicle of thought, incarnating the language of philosophy into the tongue of his contemporaries. What has been called "the anatomical precision of philosophic Greek" made possible the expression, in that language,

of soaring metaphysics and transcendental concepts. Abstract thought, lending reality to the highest idealism and moral truth, requires a vocabulary of abstractions. This Boethius is credited with having provided for his era, and for long centuries thereafter his labors bore fruit. Boethius' resolution to translate all the works of Aristotle and all the dialogues of Plato was broken off by his sudden incarceration—his library could not be sent to him in prison—but he converted even the interruption of his life-work into a greater good. For it was when thrown completely upon his own resources, that he composed *De Consolatione Philosophiæ,* a classic of profound simplicity, bearing witness of "the meditation which destroyeth pain."

True notions belong neither to the Past nor to the Future, but always and only to the Thinker for whom they are ever-present. The ideas of the *Consolation* are not, therefore, new—the unique contribution of Boethius is in the spirit of his discourse. The vital spark of conviction illuminating his words is the mark of an original thinker. Gibbon described the book as "a golden volume, not unworthy of the leisure of Plato or Tully, but which claims incomparable merit from the barbarism of the times and the situation of its author." Throughout the medieval period, the *Consolation* remained a favorite treatise, commending itself to the human heart which knows many prisons until man learns to know himself. Poets, notably Dante, responded to the message of Boethius, and gave continuing expression to the living philosophy communicated by him.

Again and again, over the centuries, translations, commentaries and imitations of the *Consolation of Philosophy* appeared. The work exerted a distinct influence in the formation of the modern European languages, since the translator invariably had to create for his purpose a philosophic idiom, such as Boethius himself had introduced into the language of sixth-century Rome. The English King Alfred, engaged in the eighth century in re-establishing learning among the Anglo-Saxons, himself translated the book into the English vernacular—although he eliminated the philosophy in favor of Christian moralizing. Five centuries later, Chaucer found it an inspiration, and left another English version in token of his gratitude. Further translations included one by Queen Elizabeth, and the work is said to have been well known to Shakespeare.

A book of such persistent charm for poets, philosophers and educators must be a rare human document, especially since, as a modern editor* points out, it has long been a favorite among men of the world. The classic appeal of the *Consolation* derives partly from the fact that Boethius treats of the mystery of good and evil without recourse to the evasions of revelation nor the glosses of an unexamined faith. The sharp edge of personal destiny during his prison years was not to be turned aside by academic theories. Boethius derived solace from principles as old as the *Bhagavad-Gita* —convictions, we may think, that had become inseparable from his own character. It is natural, then, that Boethius should be considered an example of "epistemological transcendentalism," the theory that "the highest knowledge of man becomes identical with, and indistinguishable from divine knowledge."

In 529, a few years after the death of Boethius, the Emperor Justinian closed the last of the Neoplatonic schools, the Platonic Academy established by Proclus in Athens. Thus, a thousand years after the time of Pythagoras, sixth century B.C., a cycle had closed, and not until the fourteenth century, almost a thousand years later, would the centenary efforts of the Theosophical Movement be resumed in their present form. In the Introductory to the *Secret Doctrine,* H. P. Blavatsky declared as one of her objects:

> The public must be acquainted with the efforts of many World-adepts, of initiated poets, writers, and classics of every age, to preserve in the records of Humanity the Knowledge of the existence, at least, of such a philosophy, if not actually of its tenets. The Initiates of 1888 would indeed remain incomprehensible and ever a seemingly impossible myth, were not like Initiates shown to have lived in every other age of history. This could be done only by naming Chapter and Verse where may be found mention of these great characters, who were preceded and followed by a long and interminable line of other famous Antediluvian and Postdiluvian Masters in the arts. Thus only could be shown, on semi-traditional and semi-historical authority, that knowledge of the Occult and the powers it confers on man, are not altogether fictions, but that they are as old as the world itself.

Boethius is in many ways a mysterious figure, but undeniably he helped to preserve the ancient knowledge, and, in his degree, was an agent for transmitting it to those who would come after him.

*Irwin Edman in the Modern Library edition (1943) of the *Consolation.*

# THE CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY

*by* BOETHIUS

[As Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita* found Krishna, his spiritual preceptor, beside him in the chariot, so Boethius pictured Philosophy as a divine spirit attending him in his search for the meaning of his misfortune. The dialogue begins with a rehearsal by Boethius of the details of his difficulties and the injustice of his fate. In the conversation which follows, "Philosophy" takes up successively each of Fortune's gifts, exposing their transitory nature, and conducts Boethius through the paradox of "good" and "bad" karma. The impersonality of universal law is expressed in a celebrated passage on the "Architect" or "Mover" of the world, with more than an intimation of the Platonic Logos and Universal Mind. A personal deity governed and governing by whim and fantasy can hardly be assimilated to the general scheme outlined by Boethius. After examining the inherent nature of virtue and vice, and the discipline a philosopher may derive from adversity, "Philosophy" comes at last—by way of a lucid distinction between time and eternity—to the asseveration of man's freedom of will. Although cast in a variety of modes, the *Consolation* won the admiration of many generations—from the sixth to the sixteenth century, and after—for its distinctive literary virtue: it was both readable and profound. This series of extracts (which will be completed next month) is taken from the translation by Lord Viscount Preston, London, 1695. Except for the old-fashioned form of the letter "s," the archaic spelling has been retained.—Eds. THEOSOPHY.]

*(From Book Two)*

WHAT is it then, O Man, which hath plunged thee into this Abyss of Misery and Sorrow? Certainly thou hast seen something astonishing and new. Dost thou think that Fortune is changed against thee? Thou art deceived: This was always her Custom, and is her Nature: She hath rather, in this Misadventure of thine, preserved her Constancy in changing: * * * If thou approvest of her Manners and Customs, use them, and complain not: If thou dost abominate her Perfidy and Falseness, contemn and cast her off, whose Sports are so dangerous and hurtful: For that which occasions thy Melancholy, ought to have been a Cause of thy greatest Joy and Comfort: For she hath forsaken thee; of

whom no Man can be secure but she will leave him also. Dost thou then esteem that to be Happiness which is ever passing, and will not stay? Is that present Fortune so dear to thee which is not permanent, and which, when it is gone, leaves Griefs and Discontents to succeed in its place? So that if a Man at his pleasure cannot retain her, and if when she goeth away she maketh him miserable, what is she, being so ready to take her Flight, but a sure Presage of future Calamity?

* * * * *

If therefore thou dost esteem thy self unfortunate, because the things which heretofore seem'd pleasing to thee are passed away, there is no reason for it, because even those things which do now afflict thee, do also pass. * * * For although there is seldom Hope that the things of Fortune will continue with us, yet the last Day of a Man's Life seemeth to be the last also of that Prosperity which remains with us. Where then is the great Difference? What doth it import then, whether thou by Death leavest it, or it by Flight doth leave thee?

* * * * *

He who is not used to Adversity, is overcome and thrown down by every cross Adventure; and the least evil Accidents discompose him: upon so minute and slender things doth the Happiness of the most Fortunate depend. How many Men are there in the World, dost thou believe, who would think themselves advanced almost to Heaven, if they could attain but to the least part of the Remainder of thy Fortunes? This very Place, which thou callest a Place of Banishment, is their Country who inhabit it: And thy Miseries arise only from the ill-grounded Opinion that thou art miserable. And again, every Lot may be happy to that Man who can with Equanimity and Courage bear it.

* * * * *

The Nature of every thing acts properly according to its End, nor is mix'd with foreign Effects of differing Beings, but of its own Accord repels what is contrariant to it, or may be destructive of it. Riches cannot extinguish the unquenchable Thirst of Avarice; nor can Power give him Command of himself, who is already the Slave of his Vices, and bound in the insoluble Chains of his Lusts.

So Dignities conferr'd upon ill Men do not make them worthy, but rather shew their Unworthiness by laying them open, and discovering their Shame. * * * And lastly, the same thing may be said of all the Gifts of Fortune, in which it is manifest, that nothing is desirable, nor is there any thing of native Good in them, since they are not always the Lot of good Men, nor make them good to whom they are allotted.

* * * * *

Thou dost not perhaps yet understand what I am about to say. The thing is wonderful which I desire to tell thee, and therefore I almost want Words to express this Paradox, to wit, that adverse Fortune doth more profit and truly more advantage Men than prosperous: For this, under the Cloak and Shew of Happiness, when she smileth and caresses, lies and deceives; the other always fairly and openly declares her Enmity, and shews her Instability by her constant Changes: That deceives, this instructs; that by a precious Shew of Good binds the Minds of those she favours; this by the Knowledg of her Fickleness frees and absolves them: therefore thou mayst observe the one always faithless, airy, wavering, and ignorant of its own Condition; the other sober, stay'd and even prudent in managing and making the best use of Adversity. Lastly, prosperous Fortune, by her Allurements and Blandishments, draws Men from the right, aside, and out of the direct way, leading to that which is the sovereign Good; whilst, for the most part, the other doth not only lead Men, but as it were draws them with a Hook to true and genuine Happiness. Further, thinkest thou that it is to be esteemed the least Good which we receive from this hard, and at the first sight, horrible Fortune, that she doth discover to thee the Hearts of thy faithful Friends, since she distinguisheth between the constant and doubtful Countenances of thy Companions and Acquaintance; and when she departeth, that she taketh away her Friends and leaves thine. At what rate wouldst thou have bought the knowledg of this, when thou wert (as it seemed to thee) in thy prosperous Estate? Forbear then to deplore the Loss of thy Riches and Honours, since thou hast found the most valuable Jewel, the most pretious kind of Riches, I mean the Knowledg of thy unalterable and sincere Friends.

*(From Book Three)*

From what I have said then it may without doubt appear, that all these mentioned Ways are wrong and deceitful, and cannot lead Men to that Happiness which they promise: And with how many Evils and Inconveniences they are perplexed, I shall soon shew thee. Consider then thus: Hast thou a mind to amass Wealth? then thou must bereave the Possessor of it. Wouldst thou shine in Dignities and Titles? thou must supplicate him who is the Fountain of them, and who only can confer them; and so thou who desirest to out-go others in Honour, shall by meanly asking it become contemptible. Dost thou affect Power? thou wilt expose thy self to Danger, by subjecting thy self to the Traps and Snares of those who are under thee. Art thou desirous of Glory? being distracted by sharp and severe Dispensations, thou shalt forgo thy Security and Quiet. Wouldst thou lead a voluptuous Life? think then that all Men will scorn and contemn him who is a Slave to that vile and frail thing, his Body. * * * Esteem bodily Goods as much as thou wilt, but consider, that what thou so much admirest may in three Days be shaken and dissolved by the raging Fires of a Fever. From all which we may gather this, that those things which cannot confer those Goods which they promise, nor are perfect and consummate by a general Meeting of all Goods in themselves, can neither always conduct to Happiness, nor by themselves make any one happy.

* * * * *

O thou who with perpetual Reason rul'st
The World, great Maker of the Heaven and Earth!
Who dost from Ages make swift Time proceed,
And fix'd thy self, mak'st all things else to move!
Whom exteriour Causes did not force to frame
This Work of floating Matter, but the Form
Of sovereign Good, above black Envy plac'd
Within thy Breast: thou every thing dost draw
From the supreme Example; fairest thy self,
Bearing the World's Figure in thy Mind,
Thou formedst this after that Prototype,
And didst command it should have perfect Parts.

Thou by harmonious Measures fast dost bind
The Elements, that cold things may with hot,
And moist with dry agree, lest subtil Fire
Should fly too high, or Weight should press the Earth
And Water lower than they now are plac'd.
Thou dost the Middle Soul firmly connect
Of th' threefold Nature, which each thing doth move,
Then by agreeing Numbers it resolv'st;
When that is done, and cut into two Orbs,
It moves about returning to it self,
And then incompassing the Mind profound,
Doth by that fair Idea turn the Heaven.
Thou by such Causes dost produce all Souls
And lesser Lives, thou mak'st them to be fit
To their light Vehicles, and them dost sow
In Heaven and Earth: they then again to thee
By a kind Law, and Ordinance benign
Like a recoiling Flame gladly revert.

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## THE "LAWS" OF NATURE

The Dhyan-Chohans are the collective hosts of spiritual beings who are the vehicle for the manifestation of the divine or universal thought and will. They are the Intelligent Forces that give to and enact in Nature her "laws," while themselves acting according to laws imposed upon them in a similar manner by still higher Powers; but they are not "the personifications" of the powers of Nature, as erroneously thought. This hierarchy of spiritual Beings, through which the Universal Mind comes into action, is like an army—a "host," truly—by means of which the fighting power of a nation manifests itself, and which is composed of army corps, divisions, brigades, regiments, and so forth, each with its separate individuality or life, and its limited freedom of action and limited responsibilities; each contained in a larger individuality, to which its own interests are subservient, and each containing lesser individualities in itself.

—H.P.B.

# STUDIES IN KARMA

## I: The Elements of Sanity

A CENTRAL problem in the postwar world, in the present cycle of psychism, and in the larger whole of civilization itself, is insanity. Not insanity as confined to a certain minority whom society prefers to have drop out of sight, but insanity as a human reality touching every man where he lives, that is to say, *in his own mind.* The struggle for sanity is not limited to a few men here and there, who have in some mysterious manner contracted a degrading disease: the struggle for sanity is the battle all men wage in the degree of their existence as mind-beings. Further, it is a battle which—by one of the paradoxes constantly presented in mental phenomena—can never be won alone, although it must be faced alone. Victory is the achievement of a subtle balance: it is to understand the difference between individuality and egotism, and to make individual moral integrity the center of gravity in life. The only absolute defeat is entire oblivion to the fact of fellowship—a condition which cannot be completely maintained except by the soulless man.

Theosophists can explore, in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky and Wm. Q. Judge, the rationale of psychic, mental and moral phenomena, for these teachers discussed the nineteenth-century cycle of psychism in terms of principle, and unfolded a philosophy and science dealing with the psychological forces involved. It is to be realized, however, that in the twentieth-century unfoldment, the responsibility of theosophists is more than academic. By informing themselves on the nature and powers of mind, they will be prepared to help, with every means in their power, to build an informed public opinion on the needs and rights of a tragic minority—the mentally ill.

Learning from H.P.B.'s "Psychic and Noëtic Action," that "the metaphysics of Occult physiology and psychology postulate within mortal man an immortal entity, 'divine Mind,' or *Nous,* whose pale and too often distorted reflection is that which we call 'Mind' and intellect in men—*virtually an entity apart from the former during the period of every incarnation*"—is quite different from con-

fronting a human being in whom that separation has caused a fearful inner isolation. In "A Case of Obsession," she writes:

> Near the Earth's surface there hangs over us—to use a convenient simile—a steamy moral fog, composed of undispersed exhalations of human vice and passion. This fog penetrates the sensitive to the very soul's core; his psychic self absorbs it as the sponge does water, or as fresh milk effluvia. It benumbs his moral sense, spurs his baser instincts into activity, overpowers his good resolutions. As the fumes of a wine-vault make the brain reel, or as the choke-damp stifles one's breath in a mine, so this heavy cloud of immoral influences carries away the sensitive beyond the limits of self-control, and he becomes 'Obsessed'. . . .

This is a vivid description—but the actuality is a human crisis. *Alcoholics Anonymous,* the official publication of the A.A. organization, has to strike hard again and again at a fixed idea about alcoholism which knowledge of the process of obsession could long ago have demolished. This book is written by those who came to the realization that alcoholism in some people cannot be controlled by good resolutions, nor even by fear of death. An unrealized factor which defeated their most sincere efforts to overcome alcoholism was their susceptibility to *involuntary impulses.* The "incurable" alcoholic, one who can never safely take a drink, has no protection against the random thought which impels him to take the first drink and begin again the inevitable cycle he may strenuously desire to avoid. Many such instances would be avoidable if the philosophy of the dual mind were more widely known.

It is a sobering thought that the ignorance of non-alcoholics and "self-controlled" drinkers has served to perpetuate the key delusion in the mind of the alcoholic victim: that he is a self-conscious victim, when the fact of the matter is that he has succumbed, willingly or unwillingly, to the *mediumship* of drink—a "control" no less arbitrary than that imposed by the hypnotist.

The psychic disturbances overtaking modern civilization can hardly be exaggerated, but the growth of understanding is appallingly retarded. The term "understanding" is not used glibly: what is needed for a real cure of any psychic disorder is a perception of the underlying basis in consciousness for the mental aberration displayed. This fundamental vision of the workings of mind is not characteristic of modern psychology or psychiatry, whatever these

sciences may have accomplished in other ways. One of the last articles by H. P. Blavatsky (actually a manuscript left unfinished at her death), was on the subject of Psychology, the science of the soul, and contained a despairing observation: "Alas, and thrice alas! Soul, the Self, or Ego, is studied by modern psychology as inductively as a piece of decayed matter by a physicist." In the fifty years since that observation, the need for a science of the soul has pressed unremittingly and increasingly on a mankind whose diseases bid fair to confine themselves to psycho-somatic, if not to purely psychic, maladies.

By way of pointing to a different mode of investigation, H.P.B., in the same article, drew attention to "the Higher Self or Buddhi-Manas, which in the act of self-analysis or highest abstract thinking, partially reveals its presence and holds the subservient brain-consciousness in review." A recent autobiography, *If a Man Be Mad,* by Harold Maine, is one such self-analysis. "Harold Maine" is the pseudonym of a poet and novelist, once an "incurable" alcoholic and now (although the term might make him wince) a confirmed humanitarian. His story is the record of thought and inquiry during his search for integration and mental freedom. Its setting is that "other world" to which the insane are—even at this late date—condemned, but its powerful effect is not due to the institutional fantasia revealed by the author's personal experiences in mental hospitals.

*If a Man Be Mad* is an exceptional human document because it is a *study in consciousness.* Persons, places, and conditions are secondary, and have almost without exception been disguised beyond recognition. Students of Theosophy can be especially grateful to Maine for the spirit of his voluntary research. Whether one knows something of the actual treatment of mental patients or not—and particularly if one *does not know* why he should be acquainted with the problem of insanity—this book should be read and read carefully. Not alone in extended commentaries (which we shall review), but in innumerable random notes, Maine goes to the heart of the human situation. Where another mind, concerned with unassimilated details and unexamined experiences, leaves the reader overloaded with incoherent information, and a discouraging sense of futility, Maine proceeds with an honest self-respect and emerges

with a natural dignity which does more to recommend his conclusions than any "expert" opinion could do.

One does not gather from *If a Man Be Mad* the notion that experience is the only requisite for understanding. Among thousands of alcoholics, an extremely small percentage can preserve the "bitter integrity" which Maine would not give up. Nor would the utter loneliness of that self-reliance have sufficed, except for an instinct of sympathy and a sense of the suffering of others, which was the Ariadne's thread out of his own labyrinth. He may be said to illustrate a theosophical (and therapeutic) injunction:

> In order that one should fully comprehend *individual* life with its physiological, psychic, and spiritual mysteries, he has to devote himself with all the fervour of unselfish philanthropy and love for his brother men, to studying and knowing *collective* life, or Mankind. Without preconceptions or prejudice, as also without the least fear of possible results in one or another direction, he has to decipher, understand and *remember* the deep and innermost feelings and the aspirations of the poor people's great and suffering heart. To do this he has first "to attune his soul with that of Humanity," as the old philosophy teaches; to thoroughly master the correct meaning of every line and word in the rapidly turning pages of the Book of Life of MANKIND and to be thoroughly saturated with the truism that the latter is a whole inseparable from his own SELF.

While the mysteries of lower *manas*—mind allied to personal desires and the physical brain—are infinite, the elements of sanity are always the same. Individual minds may become disordered for many reasons, but it invariably means that devotion to the interests of others seems no longer possible or desirable. "To be lost in one's own abyss is insanity," wrote J. P. Mowbray, at the turn of the century. Mowbray, an overwrought Wall Street financier, was compelled by the imminence of heart failure to terminate abruptly a successful business career. He found peace of mind, re-established his life in a normal tempo, and described his successful experiment in *A Journey to Nature*. Nevertheless, it was not Nature alone, or chiefly, but *other human beings* with and through whom he accomplished his renascence. He and Maine are about as far away in mood as can be imagined—Mowbray's book being virtually an idyll beside *If a Man Be Mad*—and yet the healing

interplay of independence and communal sympathy is the background of both accounts. However distilled, the elixir of selflessness is indispensable to sanity.

Harold Maine's purpose is expressed in his description of the first asylum he entered voluntarily in the search for relief from alcoholism: "I was sure that among the insane I could hold my own, and equally sure I would discover some truth about myself and my fellow men. I felt a horrible loneliness, though, for I realized that I was to become one little floating island of individuality among hundreds of other little floating islands, all equally individual."

Maine's first experience of the irrational brutality inflicted on the mentally ill was had in this hospital, but "by chance" he drew the attention and the friendship of a resident Chinese surgeon, and gained "insight into the point of view of an institutional doctor with a conscience." Maine was shortly moved to the open ward, called the "Psycho Club," where patients with mild and harmless mental troubles lived together and tried to take care of each other. The chief rule of the club was simple: "The best thing to do is humor anyone you think is acting queerly and don't humor yourself." The Psycho Club was by way of being a unique experience for Maine, who, since his Army days, "and then only through drunkenness," had never adjusted himself to any group of human beings: "When I entered any social group I would have to improvise in order to seem to belong to it. Then I would feel shaken and unreal for days."

This analysis of too little real individuality bears evident relation to the phenomena of mediumship, and in fact many of Maine's observations reveal how astral images impinge on a brain made passive through one or another form of psychic excess. The phenomena of obsession in delirium tremens and the curious reality of hallucinations are extreme phases of mediumship, but the early signs of this tendency are also recorded by Maine. He traces from early childhood a habit of inventing fictitious existences in which to hide his loneliness and fear. As a young man, for instance, he found in drink, in reading books, and then in writing poetry, a release from reality. Writing might have been a discipline, but it was not: "Words, phrases, ideas, images and poems ready to come out in one lump, made a carnival in my brain. My poems jeered,

challenged, explained, exclaimed, discovered, rejected, and worshiped; they were tender and tough, cruel and saintly—a world in themselves, nothing less. One line might have in it the sinewy toughness of the Wobbly jargon, the next the sensual softness of love talk."

The psychic indulgence of such "free" verse did little to eliminate his mental unease, and he continued to avoid the necessity of control by resorting to "more of the same," in the usual way of human nature:

> When reality began to slip and every act of the day became like some portion of a play quickly learned and badly acted; when I dared not release myself in poetry or dreams for fear I would never return from them; when there were no memories but of things undone and of things done wrong, I would commit myself to the discipline of alcohol. . . . Drink was not only a discipline but a religion and a padded cell. Drink was the whole of my future, the cancellation of my past, and the constant need of my present.

Later he remarks that the roles he played when drunk were never the product of conscious daydreams: "I simply heard them coming from me as from a stranger and I would let them flow, caught between shame and the ecstasy of finding something that would place me, I thought, upright in the eyes of men." He also reports the statement of a psychiatrist, head of a mental hospital, who told him, "It has at times been my theory with alcoholics that their periodicities are almost within the realm of posthypnotic behavior" —an example, writes Maine, of "psychiatry with insight." Further it is difficult not to see in Maine's words on the inner world of the insane a direct intimation of what theosophical teachings refer to as the astral realm, "the great picture gallery of the earth, where the seer can always gaze upon any event that has ever happened, as well as those to come." In *Echoes from the Orient*, Wm. Q. Judge relates that "as an enormous screen or reflector the astral light hangs over the earth and becomes a powerful universal hypnotizer of human beings." The inversion of clairvoyance (see *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 142) is well conveyed by Maine:

> The whole battle of Midway or the Coral Sea could easily take place within my few inches of brain. Anything could happen there with even more verisimilitude than actual events the eyes and ears were circumscribed from capturing. One has only to sam-

> ple a little of the hallucinatory world to realize just what a vast thing it is potentially. It is limitless and that cannot be truly said of anything else. Even the universe may be bounded but the mad mind is not. It is challenged by borders; lured onward by the end of distance. Superlatives are dropped from the vocabulary once one enters that world; miracles are the rule.

It may be said in passing that what the hallucinator experiences passively, without his will and against his reason, the trained seer can evoke with purpose and consciously. The cycle of psychism in which the world is again involved is marked by many excursions into the astral realm, mostly belonging to the first category. Preoccupation with forms and images, the spinning out of sensations, the overly emotional histories and case histories, the cult of "frustration" draining art and literature of content and achievement—these are widespread psychic phenomena. A mind not prepared for the new influences and impulses of the cycle is in danger of being overwhelmed by the unfamiliar, unless the manasic habit of *thoughtful* observation is strong. It is noteworthy in this connection that Harold Maine's book is distinguished throughout by concentration on meaning and purpose, rather than on the reproduction of sensation.

Maine reverts several times to the idea of "the greatest of all loyalties, that of a common vice," evidently because he considered that people bound by such a tie "couldn't be other than honest with each other." His real concern, however, is with honesty, for he found the maudlin self-abasement of some members of Alcoholics Anonymous repellent. An instinct for impersonality is strongly marked in the word-picture of "Bill," the founder of A.A.:

> As a person he [Bill] was trying not to be there. Only as an impersonal experience was he asserting himself.
>
> I always mistrust men who have an immediate effect on an audience. I mistrust spine-tingling reactions, unless they are aroused by art, the way some symphonies, paintings, poems, and books arouse me. I feel that a reputation, based largely on folklore, tradition, or publicity, is asserting itself. I try to remove the man from this and see what he has. I also try to remove the name of an artist in the same way so that I can have his creation directly. If the name of the great Shakespeare in itself makes me respond, then I lay him aside until he no longer has that effect. It's the only safe way. I didn't mistrust Bill. I knew why he had selected the word "Anonymous" for the organization as soon as he spoke.

Maine's innate resistance to undue personal influence made it inevitable that the second step of the A.A. method—belief that a "Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity"—would give him pause. This unfortunate excursion into the weakness of religion is thought by perhaps most A.A. members to be the secret of their success, and it is obvious that any device which will dissociate the *man* from his habit will produce results of a sort. As Mr. Judge phrases it, "The desire is not in [the drinker] unless he is foolish enough to identify himself with the desire. Once he ceases to so identify himself, the desire will lose more than half its power over him."

Alcoholics Anonymous has encountered, interestingly enough, a more than occasional opposition to the concept of an extraneous Power, so much so that A.A. workers issue an immediate disclaimer to prospective members, explaining that no particular image of God is required, but simply God "as you yourself conceive him." The fact that a man, even when apparently given over to the "outside power" of drink, can manage to conceive of a being *higher than himself,* and hold to that conception, has not struck psychologists as unusual, so far as we know. Yet it is a remarkable demonstration of the spiritual mind. How could thought rise higher than its source? In the principle that only a high spiritual being can *imagine the existence* of a high spiritual being will someday be found a lasting cure for the habit of dependence in any form.

Maine was comparatively untouched by the religious atmosphere of A.A., perhaps because his own desire to help others like himself carried with it no element of benevolent condescension; as he points out in another connection: "What I wanted to do was immerse myself in the lives of people who seemed to be like me and emerge with self-knowledge." The God-idea is superfluous in such a scheme. Seeking refuge from his still-unconquered alcoholism, he determined to become an attendant in a mental hospital, watch the doctors treat men like himself, and penetrate whatever knowledge they had. After that, he thought, he would be able to cure himself: "I knew positively that if I helped one man who was like me I had then helped myself to the same degree."

# YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK—

WHAT'S *going to bring hope back into human society? It seems as if the world will never be light-hearted again. And why do the "optimistic" philosophers like Emerson leave us faintly resentful, even though we would like to share their enthusiasm?*

The only trouble with the enthusiasm of other people is that they cannot give it to us. We have to generate our own. But is that so difficult? The widespread depression in the world might even be a source of hope to us, because it marks the equally widespread conviction among men that something is wrong. When religions are no longer able to drug mankind into a stupor with irrational panaceas, then there is hope—for recognition of a philosophy of the rational explanation of things.

"Life is a contest of smiles, if we really know our business," said Mr. Judge. That is worth thinking over, for it may reward us with the answer to our individual depressions, and thus give us the key to a hopeful society.

First, of course, we have to find out just what "our business" is, and only then are we really able to go about doing it. The man who knows what he is doing his work for, and has reasoned faith that his efforts will have beneficent effects on his fellows—is a happy man, and he alone. The worst kind of depression is not the result of the frustration of our personal desires, but of our inability to fulfill what we, unconsciously, perhaps, recognize as a worthwhile function. It has been said that salvation is, among other things, the right use of pain. Depression, it would seem, is pain of which we make no use. There are many times, especially these days, when the tenuous magic of the joy of living eludes us. These are opportunities for us to substitute the moral for the psychic "elation"—and grasp the joy of living *rightly.*

*The lower kingdoms have a natural impulse toward perfection. What has man to help him on, in addition to his "self-induced and self-devised efforts"?*

Man has all "natural impulse" translated to a higher, intellectual or self-conscious level, where it may become a part of his inspiration in strivings upward. Then, too, man is enabled to perceive a goal at the end of his efforts, which fact alone is worth a hundred natural impulses. Can we think, if man can help the lower kingdoms to progress, there is no help for man in turn? Do not the legends of Great Saviors, such as Buddha and Christ, indicate that there may be higher beings who assist in kindling the spiritual aspirations of the ordinary human being?

The *Upanishads* teach that the universe exists for the "experience and emancipation of the soul." This gives us a clue to the distinction between the task of man and that of his younger brothers. To gain experience in matter is the object of the three lower kingdoms. As men, we have gone through all possible experiences as to matter itself, it is said, and what is now needed is emancipation from them, or understanding, which is the emancipation of the soul.

*Are all instincts animal?*

In one sense, we can see that they are, for instincts are lessons learned in previous periods of evolution. That is, we, as self-conscious manasic beings, never learned an instinct—instincts are the heritage of the total and undifferentiated experience of "lower" monads. We call them animal since it is in that kingdom that they become most manifest, although the evolution of the mineral and vegetable is directed in a similar manner. At the same time, what we may term an instinct may be in reality an intuition—the other form of direct consciousness, proceeding from the Buddhic, rather than the Kamic principle. Also we should remember that much of our vaunted "rational thinking" is the product of the "animal" man. H.P.B., for instance, speaks of "the ephemeral and animal, though intellectual man."

To some, the word "animal" implies something evil, but this is true only in a limited and relative sense. If we watch, we will see that the pull of instinct is always centripetal—tending to ourselves as the center and point to be protected. Men will often act against instinct at the behest of intuition or self-conscious thought. Instincts are not evil, however; they simply represent stages of development through which we have already passed.

*There are a lot of nice, pleasant things we would like to do which don't hurt anybody else. Surely they're not "wrong," are they? Are there not some personal desires which are not selfish?*

The questioner sounds as if he's been too often exhorted to eat sour grapes because they're good for other people. This is unfortunate—and unnecessary. We ought not to forget that it is entirely possible for a duty or obligation to be a "nice, pleasant thing" to do. An act should receive justification from its *positive* value, not from some labored rationalization to the effect that it "hurts nobody else." The implication of such a phrase is that it hurts nobody—but ourselves. If there is any question about the value of a specific personal desire, we have a possible first hint as to its deceptive nature.

It is not difficult to recognize that there are no neutral acts. Everything we do and think has its inevitable effect in molding our character, and hence has an influence on our fellow-men. An act can do no harm only if it does active good. Modern physics supplies us with an analogy. The nucleus of an atom was supposed to contain, in addition to positively-charged "protons," a number of uncharged particles or "neutrons" which had weight but no electrical energy. Scientists have now discovered, however, that the electrical charge of the proton is constantly shifting from one group to the other, making protons out of neutrons and *vice versa.*

Neutrons, then, may represent acts which produce no observable effect either for good or evil *at the time.* But, according to the new theory, this neutrality may be only temporary, lasting until the latent character of the act eventually emerges. *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 511) states that inertia is the "greatest of occult forces." The personality, weighted by seemingly amoral acts—the things which apparently do us no harm (and therefore no good)—might be compared to the "stones, minerals, rocks, and even chemical 'atoms'," which, H.P.B. says (*S.D.* I, 626 fn.), "are simply organic units in profound lethargy. Their coma has an end and their inertia becomes activity." In the same way, we must some day bring to an end all the temporary "comas" in which we indulge, and transmute the inertia of purposeless acts into a constant moral "charge." When we stand still even temporarily, we lose some contact with the rest of nature: "nature" remains not a moment inactive.

# "THEOSOPHIST" EDITORIAL NOTES

## II: The God-Idea

ESOTERIC Theosophists are gnostics, not agnostics. They affirm that they can know by spiritual perception Parabrahmam or Adi Buddha, which is the universal spiritual principle, the origin and the basis of all Cosmic Evolution. It is the one element and the one energy of which every form of existence is but an expression and a manifestation. And there is no personality or God beyond this principle. (July, 1884)

As the science and study of Yoga Philosophy pertains to Buddhist, Lamaic and other religions supposed to be atheistical, *i.e.,* rejecting belief in a personal deity, and as a Vedantin would by no means use such an expression, we must understand the term "absorption into God" in the sense of union with the *Universal Soul,* or *Parama Purusha*—the Primal or One Spirit. (January, 1881)

By Ishwar and Master is not meant the personal God, whom the believers in such God suppose to be the creator of the universe, and outside the universe—Brahmachari Bawa* does not recognize such a god in relation to the universe. His god is Brahma, the eternal and universal essence which pervades every thing and every where and which in man is the divine essence which is his moral guide, is recognized in the instincts of conscience, makes him aspire to immortality and leads him to it. This divine spirit in man is designated Iswar and corresponds to the name Adonai—Lord, of the Kabalists, *i.e.,* the Lord within man. (November, 1879)

[*The following note is attached to a correspondent's phrase, "the Almighty, the Universal, the All-knowing and the All-Glorious God."*—Eds. Theosophy.]

Who, whenever seen, will always prove to be man's own deific principle, his own luminous *Atman,* at best, and not God or Iswar, who—as well proved by Kapila—if Impersonal and Infinite *cannot* be seen, and if Personal, hence *finite,* is not the "universal" spirit. (November, 1881)

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*A saintly Maratha Brahman, whose brief autobiography is reprinted in *The Theosophist,* I, 51 (November, 1879).—Eds. Theosophy.

Once we admit of a Deity, the God of the pantheists seems the only reasonable one. True pantheists do not say that *everything* is God—for they would be fetich worshippers then; but that God is in everything and the *whole* in God. (March, 1881)

The belief in a personal god may do some good under certain circumstances, but it may also do a great deal of harm according to the attributes which we give to that personal god. A personal god without personal attributes is unthinkable and illogical; because it is his personal attributes, which constitute him a "personal" god. If we believe that such a god is passionate, revengeful and changeable, if we believe that he favors some and condemns others, that he can be persuaded to forgive our sins and thereby act contrary to the law of justice, such a belief not only impedes our own progress, but is highly pernicious. (October, 1884)

[*A correspondent asks if seeing "a bright spot of light," and having a brilliant "shower of flowers" which he tried to grasp but could not, is "a response that God has been pleased with his worshipper, meditation being, I believe, the unique way of spiritual worship."*]

It depends. Those of our orthodox native contributors, who worship some particular God—or, if they so prefer, the one ISWAR under some particular name—are too apt to attribute every psychological effect brought on by mental concentration during the hours of religious meditation to their special deity, whereas, in 99 cases out of 100, such effects are due simply to purely *psycho-physiological* effects. We know a number of mystically-inclined people who see such "lights," as that as soon as they concentrate their thoughts. Spiritualists attribute them to the agency of their departed friends; Buddhists—who have no personal God—to a *pre-nirvanic* state; pantheists and Vedantins to *Maya*—illusion of senses; and Christians, to a foresight of the glories of Paradise.

The modern Occultists say that, when not directly due to cerebral action whose normal functions are certainly impeded by such an artificial mode of deep concentration, these lights are glimpses of the Astral Light, or, to use a more *scientific* expression, of the "Universal Ether" firmly believed in by more than one man of

science, as proved by Mr. Balfour Stewart's *Unseen Universe.* Like the pure blue sky closely shrouded by thick vapours on a misty day—is the Astral Light concealed from our physical senses, during the hours of our normal, daily life. But when concentrating all our spiritual faculties, we succeed, for the time being, to paralyze their enemy—physical senses—and the inner man becomes, so to say, distinct from the man of matter, then, the action of the ever-living spirit, like a breeze that clears the sky from its obstructing clouds, sweeps away the mist which lies between our normal vision and the Astral Light, and we obtain glimpses into, and of, that light.

The days of "smoking furnaces" and "burning lamps" which form part of the Biblical visions are well gone by and—to return no more. But, whosoever, refusing natural explanations, prefers *supernatural* ones, is, of course, at liberty to imagine that an "Almighty God" amuses us with visions of flowers, and sends burning lights before making "covenants" with his worshippers.

(November, 1881)

## IS CREATION POSSIBLE FOR MAN?

The Editor of the Theosophist
Madame,

Talking the other day to a friend, who, like me, without being a Theosophist, takes a very great interest in the movements of your Society, I incidentally happened to remark that the "Brothers of the first section" were credited with such large powers, that even *creation* was not at times impossible to them. In support of my assertion, I instanced their own cup and saucer phenomenon, as narrated by Mr. Sinnett in his *Occult World,* which phenomenon appeared to me to be something more than the mere *reproduction, transference* or *unearthing* from its hiding-place of an article *lost* or *stolen,* like the brooch. My friend. however, warmly objected to my statement—remarking that creation was not possible to man, whatever else he may be able to accomplish.

Believing, as I then did, in Christianity as the most perfect heaven-descended code of ethics on earth, there was a time in the history of my chequered life (chequered, I mean, as regards the vast sea of doubt and unbelief on which I have been tossing for over twenty years), when I would have myself as warmly, even

indignantly, repelled the idea of creation as a possibility to man; but the regular reading of your journal, and a careful perusal of Mr. Sinnett's book and of that marvel of learning and industry, your own *Isis Unveiled,* have effected quite a revolution (whether for good or bad has yet to be seen) in my thoughts, and it is now some time since I have begun to believe in the possibility of phenomena beyond the range of my own narrow vision.

Will you kindly tell me which of us is right, my friend or I? Not having the honour of being personally known to you, I close this letter only with my initial.

H.

## Our Answer

The question to be dealt with is hardly whether our correspondent or his friend is right, for we understand him to take up the prudent attitude of a seeker after truth who shrinks from affirming dogmatically that creation *is* possible for man, even while unwilling to accept the dogmatic negative assertion of his friend that "it is impossible." Before coming to the gist of the question raised, we have, therefore, to notice the illustrations which this letter affords of the ways in which such a question may be considered.

When our correspondent's friend denies that creation is possible for man, we can hardly assume that he does so from any conviction that he has sounded all the mysteries of Nature, and knowing all about the universe—being able to account for all its phenomena—has ascertained that the process, whatever that may be, which he conceives of as creation does not go on anywhere in obedience to the will or influence of man, and has further ascertained that there is something in man which makes it impossible that such a process should be accomplished. And yet without having done all that, it is bold of him to say that creation is impossible. Assuming that he is not a student of occult science,—and the tone of the letter before us conveys the impression that he is not—our friend's friend, when he makes his dogmatic statement, seems to be proceeding on the method but too commonly adopted by people of merely ordinary culture and even by a few men of science—the method which takes a large group of preconceived ideas as a standard to which any new idea must be applied. If the new idea

fits in with, and seems to support the old ones, well and good; they smile upon it. If it clashes with some of these they frown at it, and ex-communicate it without further ceremony.

Now the attitude of mind exhibited by our correspondent, who finds many old beliefs shattered by new ideas, the force of which he is constrained by moral honesty to recognize, and who, therefore, feels that in presence of the vast possibilities of Nature he must advance very cautiously and be ever on his guard against false lights held out by time-honoured prejudices and hasty conclusions —seems to us an attitude of mind which is very much better entitled to respect than that of his over-confident friend. And we are the more anxious to recognise its superiority in the most emphatic language, because when we approach the actual question to be discussed, the bearing of what we have to say will be rather in favour of the view which the "friend" takes of "creation"—if indeed we are all attaching the same significance to that somewhat over-driven word.

It is needless after what we have just said to point out that if we are now going to make some statements as to what is, and what is not the fact, as regards some of the conditions of the universe, we are not on that account infringing the rules of thought just laid down. We are simply giving an exposition of our little fragment of occult philosophy as taught by masters who are in a position to make positive statements on the subject and the credibility of which will never be in danger from any of those apparently inexplicable occurrences related in the books to which our correspondent refers, and likely enough, as he justly conceives, to disturb many of the orthodox beliefs which he has seen crumbling around him.

It would be a volume we should have to write and not a brief explanatory note, if we attempted to begin, by elucidating the conviction we entertain that the Masters of Occult Philosophy above referred to are entitled to say what is and what is not. Enough for the present to say what we believe would be said in answer to the question before us, by *those who know.*

But we must have a clear understanding as to what is meant by creation. Probably the common idea on the subject is that when the world was "created," the creator accorded himself or was some-

how accorded a dispensation from the rule *ex nihilo nihil fit* and actually made the world out of nothing. If that is the idea of creation to be dealt with now, the reply of the philosophers would be not merely that such creation is impossible to man but that it is impossible to gods, or God; in short, absolutely impossible. But a step in the direction of a philosophical conception is accomplished when people say the world was "created" (we say fashioned)—out of CHAOS. Perhaps, they have no very clear idea of what they mean by Chaos, but it is a better word to use in this case than "nothing." For, suppose we endeavour to conceive chaos as the matter of the universe in an unmanifested state, it will be seen at once that though such matter is perfectly inappreciable to ordinary human senses, and to that extent equivalent to "nothing," creation from such materials is not the production of something which did not exist before, but a change of state imposed upon a portion of universal matter which in its previous state was invisible, intangible and imponderable, but not on that account non-existent.* Theosophist-Occultists do not, however, use the word "creation," at all, but replace it by that of EVOLUTION.

Here we approach a comprehension of what may have been the course of events as regards the production of the mysterious cup and saucer described in Mr. Sinnett's book. It is in no way inconceivable—if the production of manifestation in matter is the act accomplished by what is ordinarily called creation—that the power of the human will, in some of its transcendent developments, may be enabled to impose on unmanifested matter, or chaos, the change which brings it within the cognisance of the ordinary human senses. (December, 1881)

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*It is one of the many reasons why Buddhist philosophy refuses to admit the existence and interference in the production of the universe of a direct creator or god. For once admit, for argument's sake, that the world *was* created by such a being, who, to have done so, must have been omnipotent, there remains the old difficulty to be dealt with—who then created that pre-existing matter, that eternal, invisible, intangible, and imponderable something or chaos? If we are told that being "eternal" and imperishable it had no need of being "created," then our answer will be that in such a case there are TWO "Eternals" and two "Omnipotents"; or, if our opponents argue that it is the omnipotent No. 1 or God who created it, then we return to where we first started—to the creation of *something* out of *nothing*, which is such an absolute absurdity before science and logic that it does not even require the final unanswerable query resorted to by some precocious children—"And who created God!"—Ed.

# EVERYDAY QUESTIONS

## On Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms

*THE whole of Patanjali seems to be concerned with the problems of self-discipline—but self-discipline of a very specialized sort. Little or nothing is written about the modes of discipline necessary for entering a field of action. Rather the emphasis is upon ways of leaving the involvements of the manifested world. But would not the student of occult science seek to learn both how to leave such involvements and also how to "incarnate" in them most fully and intelligently?*

This question raises a very interesting consideration. All genuine religions and occult disciplines catalogue necessary restraints against purely impulsive action in the physical world. It has not been customary to found a religion upon the need of every Soul to involve itself with matter, for the karmic forces of evolution precipitate each being without delay into as many tangible experiences as consciousness is able to assimilate. The voice of the great religions of the past has expressed in a thousand different ways, "Take heed lest you forget you are a Soul," and, "Move slowly and carefully in your selection of experiences in the world so that spiritual vision be not blurred." When and if a once genuine religion becomes self-satisfied or reactionary, however, there come reformers and revolutionary prophets to demand that men desert the philosophy of escapism for the philosophy of obligation to one's fellows. The message of Buddha was primarily an inspired revolt against the mental inertia which had submerged Brahmanism. Both Socrates and Christ also remonstrated against the habit of rejecting an unjust world, which is simply an indifference to the idea that there are *necessary* involvements and obligations. So the subtle "middle way" or "golden mean" represented by the Wisdom Religion has been neither a counsel to avoid involvement or participation in human experience, nor a counsel to welcome involvement for its own sake. Nevertheless the emphasis on one or the other of these factors has changed from age to age, as the teachers of Occult Science have encountered the obstacles characteristic of the minds of their times.

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NOTE.—This article concludes the series begun in November, 1946.

Our present period, as a natural moment of fruition in Kali-Yuga, has tumbled together all of the virtues and vices of the past—the strengths and weaknesses of the men who determined the course of history in past centuries and millenniums. At this time man encounters both indifference to courageous and vital living and the tendency to submerge human life indiscriminately in the sensations of matter. Further, the things that were once states of mind have crystallized into oppressive social, political and economic situations. The indifference of nineteenth-century capitalism was, in occult terms, "a refusal to incarnate" in the problems of *all* mankind—to recognize a fraternity with the poorer and the less fortunately endowed. The callous institution of slavery had a similar origin. During the many years when both of these human institutions flourished, religion came to be more and more a false withdrawal from the world, losing all semblance to the wise counsels of old, which had stressed a *thoughtful* and *careful,* rather than an impulsive, entrance into the struggle of human affairs.

Patanjali, it must be remembered, was Teacher in an age prior to our own religious and social crystallizations of indifference and sensualism. He is counselling the adoption of a state of mind rather than any specific mode of action. The political or social reformer, the religious revolutionary, and the determined individual ascetic can all make use of Patanjali's classifications of mental states, regardless of how busy his hands or emotions may be in the work he has set himself to perform. Few are the writers that show as clearly as does Patanjali the possibility, and finally the necessity, of exercising continually the three powers of creation, preservation and destruction in ordering one's own mind and actions. It may be remembered, too, that though Patanjali's Self-governed Sage, "Emancipated" and dwelling in "Isolation," has learned to refrain from ill-considered action—he has not forgatten action itself, nor the desire to be a moving force in evolution.

*While I can find many a nugget of wisdom and many a hint that is valuable and practical in Patanjali, still, as a whole, this little book seems to me far beyond a Westerner's capacity. Nowhere does one gain so full a sense of the powers latent in man, but most Westerners are not desirous of obtaining such powers.*

*Ought there not to be some method suggested whereby one could really get at the core of this teaching? Can any be offered for consideration?*

The writer can do no better on this point than quote directly from Mr. Judge's *Path* Magazine, September, 1888, where this very question is taken up. "Study of Patanjali," it is stated (III, 200), "will repay you amply":

> So deep is it that, no matter how much you perceive in each aphorism, there are still mines below. The best study is done in this wise. After *the mind* has extracted all it can from an aphorism, then hold it in your brain; take it about with you, as it were, into the street cars, while you wait for lunch, or where not else. Simply brood it,—as we say of a bird that she broods the nest. The subconscious mind knows the under side of that aphorism; it is based upon the finer forces; it attracts them and they will enlighten you. This process is mysterious,—that is to say, it cannot be better put into words. It must be experienced to be known. And thus you apply to Patanjali his own method of abstract meditation.

This process—the full control of the brain-mind—involves a restraint of the characteristic motions of *kama-manas,* as detailed by Mr. Judge in the *Ocean.* In intellectual terms, these are (1) the tendency to rush away from any concept or idea, as to a maze of peripheral questions or associated notions; (2) the tendency to fix on the agreeable aspect of the idea; (3) a fascination with its disagreeable or personally disturbing implications; and (4) the inclination to remain passive, considering the idea not at all. Patanjali's doctrine, like any other philosophy, grows on and in the mind not in these sporadic motions, but by the *everyday* questions and answers which open up communication between higher and lower *manas.*

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## A PRINCIPLE OF LEARNING

Every person of learning is finally his own teacher, the reason of which is that principles, being a distinct quality to circumstances, cannot be impressed upon the memory; their place of mental residence is the understanding and they are never so lasting as when they begin by conception. —THOMAS PAINE

# ON THE LOOKOUT

## A Psychiatrist Goes To Court

The United States Post Office Department was recently prevailed upon to take action against the distribution by mail of the *Natural Herald,* a bi-monthly publication of a California nudist society, on the ground that it was obscene. The defense called a distinguished witness, Dr. Frederic Wertham, senior psychiatrist of New York City Department of Hospitals, and president of the Association for the Advancement of Psychotherapy. In giving testimony, Dr. Wertham launched an unexpected attack in another quarter and stirred up interest in an investigation of the ten million comic books circulated weekly in the United States, by listing many of them as degrading and obscene both in intent and execution. According to a New York *Herald Tribune* report (Dec. 27, 1947), Dr. Wertham exempted the photographs of *Natural Herald* from an obscenity charge by stating that it "was far from obscene per se in its purpose or in its effect."

Comic books, however, he termed "definitely harmful, guilty of instilling the wrong attitudes toward sex and violence." The *Tribune* recounts that—

> For three hours, with a brief intermission for lunch, Dr. Wertham held his audience interested and surprised by the vigor of his attack. He illustrated each point from a stack of comic books he had brought with him, some gathered from youngsters at the Lafargue Clinic, others bought from a newsstand on his way to the hearing.

## Fantastic Growth

An estimated ninety percent of all children in the United States read comic magazines regularly, the *Herald Tribune* dispatch continues. The extraordinary demand for this literature has apparently impressed the Roman Catholic Church, for Catholic Publications, Incorporated, has been issuing for more than a year a specially approved booklet called *Catholic Comics.* From a statistical standpoint, comic books influence more readers than any other type of printed matter. Although the majority of comic books simply create a psychological atmosphere to meet "current demand"

among youthful readers, Catholic Publications, Inc., has evidently discovered how easy it is to manipulate minds in a specific way—by simply associating the success story of the Pope and pictures of Catholic saints with scenes depicting the Notre Dame football team winning the national championship (Vol. II, No. 4, January, 1948).

The devices utilized by this extraordinary agency of religious education are similar to those used by all of the more sensational comic book creators—the "good" football players (Notre Dame) look healthy, determined, clean-living and somehow even saintly, while the football team representing the University of Southern California appears to be composed of undesirable-looking specimens, palpably suffering from a lack of Catholic inspiration.

## Is "Murder" Educative?

Although Dr. Wertham did not take the time to go into the fabulous possibilities of such methods for propagandizing youth, he did make a substantial contribution to the debate currently being waged on the advisability of encouraging comic-book reading. Gertrude Samuels, in providing a featured discussion on comic books in the New York *Times Magazine* for Nov. 30, 1947, "Too Much Murder—or Not Enough," describes two schools of thought on the subject. Many experts, she contends, claim that children need an exposure to violence as part of their natural process of growing up. Josette Frank of the Child Study Association (and incidentally an advisor on the Superman and the Hop Harrigan radio programs) has stated that "Normal children not only can 'take' it—they need it. This is partly because of the intense pleasure which they get out of it." Dr. Wertham belongs to the contrary school, and with a vengeance. "I feel," said Dr. Wertham in his court appearance, "that comics deliberately attempt to arouse semi-sadistic fantasies in young children."

## Peculiar Tastes

As if in substantiation of Dr. Wertham's view, Mrs. Samuels reported observing the behavior of a juvenile matinée audience in witnessing the motion picture, "Kiss of Death": "Children of all ages were laughing, screaming and applauding at the sadism of one character who threw an old, crippled woman in her wheel chair

down a flight of stairs." It is doubtful if this particular behavior would have occurred had not the daily "horror" diet of the children been so ample. Children were also interviewed as to their favorite radio programs. This revealed further interesting reactions, for the continual sadism of comic books is also represented by radio drama: "I like murder just for the thrill of it," was the simplest and most direct explanation the children gave.

Closely related to the phenomenal growth of the comic book's audience is the habit, apparently picked up from adults, of listening to the radio during a large proportion of the day. One child remarked to the *Times* reviewer: "I have to listen to the murder mysteries because after I go to bed my mother listens to every one and I can hear them." A recent survey reported that the majority of children listen to the radio from one to three hours of every day. The important question, of course, is the cause of this frenzied demand for perverted types of thrills.

### Psychosomatic Effects

Dr. Frank J. O'Brien, Associate Superintendent of Schools for New York—also a psychiatrist—has given a sensible version of the immediate precipitating factors:

> We know that stimulation of undesirable emotions has far-reaching bodily as well as emotional effects on children. A great many children feel insecure anyway and are desperate for affection and attention in their homes. For example, take 15-year-old Jimmy who belonged to a gang and got into trouble. I asked him, "Jimmy, don't you get sick and tired of going to the principal's office?" "No," he said, "because all the fellas see me." Children like these—and they are in all economic groups—who live in a loveless environment or who have no sense of security or belonging are thrown back on fantasy.
>
> When that happens the symptoms can be very grave. They have all kinds of sicknesses, suffer with their dreams and carry those nightmares over into their daily lives. We run a great and terrible risk in exposing children to these undesirable emotions.

### It Happens *Now*

It has been traditional for theosophists to expect some sensational outbreak of psychism on or about the middle of this century, on the basis of suggestive remarks made by H. P. Blavatsky concern-

ing the inevitability of a cyclic return of impressions that would reproduce the psychological stimulation which accompanied the Spiritualist craze of 1848. Possibly the twentieth century version will not localize itself in the same manner, and yet be much more widespread and destructive in its effects. Not only are children becoming the helpless psychic slaves of whatever impressions are designed by radio and comic strip authors, but they are being inculcated at the same time with a callousness to violence and moral perversion.

### "By Temperament and Training"

There is no satisfactory answer to this problem in terms of prohibitions against certain comic books. It is perhaps necessary to recognize that our total culture is one of the most neurotic in the history of the world, and that comic books and radio-thrill-show authors capitalize on this. Some parents may feel obligated to abstract themselves, in as complete a manner as possible, from almost everything that is a dominant psychological theme in modern culture in the hope that by adopting a radically different attitude themselves, they may give the child a chance to prefer another "world of ideas and ideals" than that which he will otherwise encounter.

Our comic books and murder mystery radio serials are not isolated evils. They are expressions of the psychological temperament of our age and we would not have them in their present form unless our politics, our economics, our religion, our education and our conventional notions of morality were not completely inadequate. While it is impossible for anyone discussing this subject from a theosophical viewpoint to provide an encouraging view of the existing "psychic situation," a better understanding of the ultimate causes for our present neuroses can perhaps be gained.

### Psychic Unbalance and Human Evolution

An increased psychic sensitivity in man means that the problems and pitfalls are more intense and complicated—not that the human soul has become more permanently debased. Mental and moral evolution has not yet been able to catch up with unfolding psychic capacities and growing intensity of feelings. Modern children are

in one sense the victims of a hectic machine civilization; they are also the confused vessels of a larger emotional potential than has been manifested in previous centuries. This enlarging potential will continue to be confused and seriously unbalanced until the time when the majority of parents and educators find some basis for believing that the destiny of man is of real significance and work of self-discipline consequently worth undertaking.

### Those Resourceful Microbes

Steven M. Spencer in "How Germs Outwit the Doctors" *(Saturdayepost,* Dec. 13, 1947) documents the baffling tactics of bacteria which have been held responsible for certain infectious diseases, from measles to infantile paralysis. Microbes, he reports, "are masters of the subtle maneuver and the surprise attack," and even their apparent retreats do not guarantee their complete disappearance. Shots in the arm, sulfa and penicillin have by no means proved infallible, and a series of unexpected epidemics has called into question the efficacy of present methods of immunization.

> A number of our troops on Okinawa, although immunized in the orthodox manner, became seriously ill with typhoid and paratyphoid fever. In Baltimore a few years ago, scores of children who had received the usual diphtheria toxoid inoculation nevertheless were struck down by a vicious type of the disease, and several of them died. Since the end of combat in the Philippines, infantile paralysis has been among the leading causes of death among American troops there—ten times as high as in the Army at home—and yet the disease is relatively rare among the natives, from whom the soldiers apparently are picking up the virus.

### "Thoroughly Seeded"

Dr. Thomas M. Rivers, director of the Hospital of the Rockefeller Institute, New York, an authority on bacterial and virus diseases, is of the opinion that infectious diseases are "nothing more than an expression of conflicts between various forms of life —conflicts waged in an effort to arrive at a satisfactory equilibrium." He points out that "It is only an infinitesimal fraction of the microbial population which causes human and animal disease," and his recommendation is that man find ways of existing *with* germs, instead of hoping, vainly, for their utter annihilation. The

influenza epidemic forecast for World War II did not materialize (according to Dr. Rivers) because of the improvement of transportation since the first World War:

> The world became one community, as far as influenza was concerned. Epidemics, usually mild or moderate, did break out here and there, and either the A or B type of flu virus was isolated from the patients' throat washings. In view of this, all populations of the world are probably thoroughly seeded with these viruses, are to a degree immunized against them, and something similar to a truce has been declared between the viruses and human beings.

Dr. Rivers does not expect another pandemic irruption like that of 1918-19, unless, of course a variant—a new variety of flu virus—suddenly springs up (as is not impossible).

### COMMUNITY—IMMUNITY?

Epidemiologists have determined that the disturbance of any social group by the addition of even healthy "outsiders" constitutes a liability, since the man-germ equilibrium is necessarily altered. The otherwise inexplicable epidemics in military training camps are explained upon this hypothesis. Dr. Rivers states:

> Many healthy men were brought together from different parts of the country, and after a time these populations became seeded with disease organisms, whereupon occasional cases of infection began to appear. Then, several times a week for long periods of time, groups of new susceptible men were added to the populations in camps. As should have been expected, epidemics occurred, and in some cases the incidence of certain diseases remained at epidemic levels for many months.

Pier 92, a Navy receiving station on the shore of the Hudson River, became in this fashion a menacing center of scarlet fever: "In the fall of 1942 ship captains began to look at each new arrival from Pier 92 as though he had just shot the albatross."

### "STABILIZING BACTERIAL POPULATIONS"

The Army had a lower rate of respiratory infections, Dr. Rivers believes, because the men were more often kept together in units, from the beginning of training on into combat:

> Consequently, the men in each Army unit got acquainted with one another's germs and learned to live with them. Bacteriologically speaking, they developed anti-bodies in their blood or tissues which defended them from the germs.

> . . . even the Army's old pyramidal squad tent had its advantages, as compared to large barracks, for the eight tent occupants soon got used to one another's microbes.

Although not pointed out by Dr. Rivers, there is undoubtedly a psychological side to "getting used" to other people's germs, and microbial harmony may even be the result of social adjustment—a phase of the *natural* immunity on which most medical authorities are unwilling to rely. The intermediate factor is perhaps certain gland secretions which are stimulated by emotional forces. Dr. W. H. Manwaring, Stanford bacteriologist, pointed out many years ago that "There is apparently convincing evidence that hormones, chemical 'organizers' or integrating enzymes play an important role in stabilizing bacterial populations, and in initiating or inhibiting dissociations or transformation phenomena." ("Environmental Transformation of Bacteria," *Science,* May 25, 1934.) The "subtle maneuver and the surprise attack" of microbes, now advertized in a national magazine, are simply a restatement of his thesis: "Bacterial genes are not immutable in function or in chemical composition." The "science" of immunization faces another crossroads.

## Dreams and the Dreamer

The seat of what has been called the "worship" of Aesculapius, "the god of the medical art," was at Epidaurus. It is a pity that we have forgotten both the pure and applied art of medicine, regarded as a sacred knowledge, which it was in ancient Greece. "The healing art in the temples of Aesculapius," wrote H. P. Blavatsky, "and at the shrines of Egypt and the East, had always been magical" (*Isis Unveiled,* II, 502). The technique of dreams, familiar to the devotees of the "god," was mentioned by Lawrence Durrell in a radio broadcast (*The Listener,* London, Sept. 25, 1947). People underwent an incubation by sleeping within the precincts of one of the hundreds of temples all over Greece:

> On arrival the suppliant made his sacrifices and performed some sort of ritual whose details are not known to us today; then he slept in the special dormitory set aside for him, and during his sleep the god appeared and either healed him outright or prescribed a course of treatment for him to follow. So you see dreams were a form of diagnosis, just as for the psychoanalyst today the patient's dreams give a kind of symbolic picture of his

subconscious preoccupations and his problems. But they were far more important in the ancient world because everybody believed they came directly from the god himself.

## A Visit to Epidaurus

The question which Mr. Durrell asked himself was: "Can dreams live on when dreamers die?" On a hot August day in 1939 he went with some friends to Epidaurus:

> It did not take long from Corinth, where we were then staying, and as the car bumped down the shallow gradient into the valley I could quite understand how not only the temple but the whole of the territory of Epidaurus was considered sacred to the god. The plain is very green and encircled by wooded mountains, and gives one the strangest impression: as if, not only the temple, but the whole landscape had been designed deliberately by men. There was something at once intimate and healing about it all. A light wind ruffled the arbutus and holm-oak; the sea was just out of sight but one heard it, like the whispering in a sea shell; above us in that shattering blue silence of the Greek sky, two eagles sat, almost motionless.

The guide was a typical Greek peasant who told Mr. Durrell that he was going to leave the peaceful valley "because of the dreams. I can't bear the dreams we have in this valley." On being asked the nature of his dreams, the guide became reticent. "But," he added, "I'll tell you one thing: the old man in the fresco appears frequently in them." The fresco in the local museum showed a grave Assyrian-looking face, but Mr. Durrell could not remember if it represented Aesculapius or not. Even the guide's two children, who had never seen the fresco, dreamed about the figure. In 1945, Mr. Durrell was in the island of Cos, working for the British administration that took over the Dodecanese Islands. In Cos, there is a centre of the Aesculapian cult. Accidentally, he came across two British soldiers who had been compelled to give up camping inside the ruined temple on the hill because of disturbed sleep, and even what they called nightmares.

## "Incorporeal Corporealities"

In this phrase Aesculapius described those phenomena, set in motion by transcendental causes, which appear in the mirror of our dreams, but are as much realities to us in that state of con-

sciousness as anything else "on this plane of maya" (*S.D.* I, 566). Long before the world had heard of Dr. Carl Jüng, the collective "unconscious" and "conscious" had been explored by generations of Adepts. Aesculapius used the knowledge so acquired by the aid of spiritual faculties, in his special field of healing. It would be surprising if "the visitations of the god" had ceased altogether to leave their memories on Nature's hidden scroll. What the civilized man lacks for the understanding of these and similar phenomena is the help of *Atma-Vidya,* without which all other knowledge and culture

> remain no better than *surface* sciences, geometrical magnitudes, having length and breadth but no thickness. They are like the soul, limbs and mind of a sleeping man: capable of mechanical motions, of chaotic dreams and even sleep-walking, of producing visible effects, but stimulated by instinctual not intellectual causes, least of all by fully conscious spiritual impulses. (*S.D.* I, 169.)

## Imagination and Primitive Man

To those who still think that the dreams of the Greek peasant and two soldiers of the last war were but reversions to the experiences of fabulous "primitive man," forever endowing inanimate nature—by some inexplicable process—with his own infantile imaginings, we commend the words of a writer of some authority in this field:

> In these fantastic creations of an exuberant subjectivism, there is always an element of the objective and real. The imagination of the masses, disorderly and ill-regulated as it may be, could never have conceived and fabricated *ex nihilo* so many monstrous figures, such a wealth of extraordinary tales, had it not had, to serve it as a central nucleus, those floating reminiscences, obscure and vague, which unite the broken links of the chain of time to form with them the mysterious dream foundation of our collective consciousness. (*S.D.* II, 293.)

## The Death of Gandhi

It is seldom that the communications system of the world devotes itself to paying tribute to a man's moral strength. During the week following the assassination of India's most beloved citizen, newspapers, radio speakers and magazine feature writers caught and transmitted a world-feeling of homage—for a man whose ways

were far from those of the world which honored him. Gandhi's *world* religion, his tolerance toward his "enemies," his almost incredible self-discipline and courage, found a response among minds and hearts of all races and faiths. Many of the things which THEOSOPHY might say about Gandhi and his part in the evolution of soul and conscience have, rather remarkably, already been said by writers whose abilities have perhaps never before been turned so wholeheartedly in a philosophical direction. Even *Time* Magazine, the inveterately superficial sophisticate, paid a thoughtful tribute. No statues nor monuments, said *Time,* will ever fittingly represent Gandhi. The only true commemoration of India's "Father" will be the story of his life "told again and again."

INDIA'S YEAR

Gandhi's death, less than six months after the founding of the Indian Republic, is at present the one focus of thought about India, although the ripples of effect spreading out from this single event are only beginning to be felt. Theosophists have a particular concern, for non-political reasons, with the freedom of India. In the past few years, therefore, many phases of the Indian problem have been dealt with in THEOSOPHY, both in newly-discovered articles by H. P. Blavatsky and Wm. Q. Judge (reprinted in the issues of April and May, 1947), and in current comment in Lookout and elsewhere (THEOSOPHY XXXIV, 431; XXXV, 63, 277, 426 and 481).

Carefully-turned words are not necessary to persuade us of Gandhi's inspirational powers: it is enough to recognize that the eyes of the world have, after all, been open wide enough to see one clear example of occult strength and greatness. As we go to press, an appreciation of Gandhi appears in the new weekly, *Manas,* from which we take the following:

> It seems unlikely that India will ever have another "father." This is an epoch in which India must grow to her own maturity and moral equilibrium, not by adoring her sages, but by becoming like them—like Gandhi.

Since so many others have in sincerity said what the editors of THEOSOPHY might otherwise say, it remains only to focus attention upon the hopeful susceptibility of the world to a drama of the Higher Life.

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*"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect; yet belongs to each and all."*

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*Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.*

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